Cape Cod

Over the past decade, Cape Cod has developed a unique legislative local and regional ground water management and regulatory program involving the cooperative effort of townships, county government, and state and federal agencies. The effort for ground water protection on Cape Cod was started under the 208 program of the federal Clean Water Act in 1975, Cape Cod was given a grant to develop the Water Quality Management Plan/ environmental impact statement for Cape Cod through EPA. The program developed by the Cape Cod Planning and Economic Development Commission (CCPEDC) was very successful and became recognized as a national prototype. It has obtained additional federal and state funds, and has received considerable press coverage, There was extensive public participation and input throughout the planning process, and this is still the case. This effort is all the more impressive because CCPEDCs role is purely advisory, a feature that may be responsible for the program's success, The program has also involved extensive participation by the USGS, as well as cooperation from the National Park Service, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Quality and Engineering, the Barnstable County Health and Environmental Department, and local communities.

The assistance of the USGS has enabled Cape Cod to define more clearly sensitive areas and has facilitated closer scrutiny of existing land use controls. One of the most important outputs of the 208 program has been the development and implementation of three model health regulations or bylaws adopted by many local communities: one dealing with water resource protection district zoning overlays; another addressing underground storage tank regulation; and a third concerning the storage, use, and disposal of toxic and hazardous materials. These three health regulations or by-laws have been adopted at the local level by a majority of the 15 towns on Cape Cod. Local actions to protect ground water go well beyond adoption of bylaws and regulations. Many of the communities have developed protective mechanisms such as transfer of development rights, granting of conservation easements, performance standards for development, open space preservation, and public education.

A second major highlight of the Cape Cod program is the development of a nitrogen-loading formula, which has been used extensively to predict the probable concentration of nitrate/nitrogen in public supply wells attributable to residential development. A third accomplishment is the delineation of recharge zones of contribution for all 140 public supply wells on Cape Cod.

The CCPEDC has recently become involved in a program with the EPA,